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ABSTRACT

This report highlights services and programs of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office that provide access to postsecondary education, noting efforts to provide services efficiently through increased use of technology and collaborations. After an introduction which discusses the Office's functions, nine sections examine: (1) "Student Financing" (e.g., design for shared responsibility reduces postsecondary education financial responsibility for low and moderate income families); (2) "Student Tuition Reciprocity" (e.g., student participation in tuition reciprocity has steadily increased); (3) "Student and Parent Information" (e.g., early awareness programs expand information to students and parents); (4) "MINITEX Library Information Network" (e.g., which enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of libraries by expanding their access to information resources for users); (5) "MnLINK Library Information System" (e.g., a statewide virtual library with a single point of access to most major Minnesota library catalogs and state-licensed electronic resources); (6) "Learning Network of Minnesota" (which links public campuses, schools, and libraries); (7) "Consumer Protection" (which provides consumer assistance and protection for students and prospective students); (8) "Collection and Maintenance of Data" (e.g., most products such as publications, tables, and reports are available on a Web site); and (9) "Federal and State Grant Programs" (the Federal Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program and the Minnesota Postsecondary Service Learning Program). (SM)

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Investing in People

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Access to Higher Education

ED 481 712



Preface

Changing demographic and economic conditions are placing increased demand on Minnesota post-secondary education to help prepare self-sufficient citizens who

contribute to a skilled, flexible, and educated workforce.

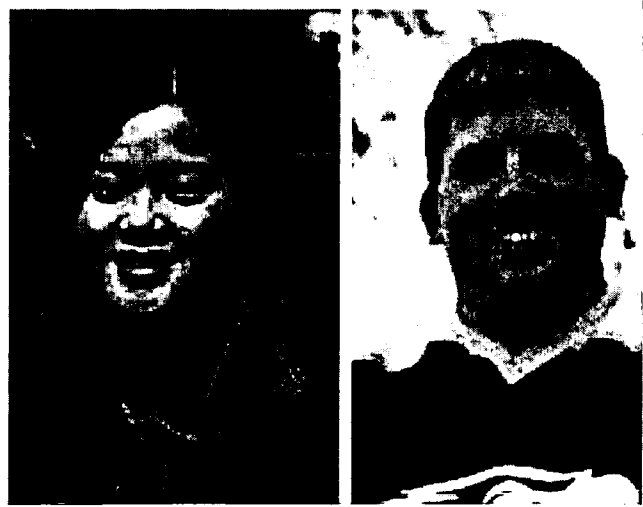
Meeting the state's future post-secondary education needs will require that citizens have access to and choice of affordable opportunities. In order for this to occur, the state will need

to continue to invest in students through funding for need-based financial aid.

This report highlights the services and programs of the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office that have been successful in providing access to post-secondary education for the people of Minnesota. The report also highlights efforts to provide services efficiently through increased use of technology and collaborations.

The students featured in this report have participated and succeeded in post-secondary education through the assistance of state financial aid and reciprocity programs, early awareness efforts, and other state post-secondary services.

Despite the economic challenges facing the state, it will be important to maintain and strengthen these quality programs and services as a necessary investment in the state's future—an investment that results in significant economic and social returns to individuals and the state.



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Introduction

The Minnesota Higher Education Services Office works to provide high quality, statewide services to the citizens of Minnesota.

As its mission indicates, the Services Office, through its advocacy and actions, works to:

- achieve student financial access to post-secondary education;
- enable students to choose among post-secondary educational options;
- protect and inform educational consumers;
- produce independent, statewide information on post-secondary education; and
- facilitate interaction among and collaborate with organizations that share responsibility for education in Minnesota.

Committed to delivering state post-secondary services effectively and efficiently, the Services Office operates with a staff of 32 full-time state funded positions. The total staff complement is 77, including federal and privately funded positions. The total Fiscal Year 2002 budget is \$285 million of which 57 percent comes from state appropriations, 41 percent from loan funds, and the remaining 2 percent from federal, special revenue, and miscellaneous funds (Figure 1). Ninety-seven percent of the \$163 million in state general fund expenditures flows through the Services Office directly in grants to students and institutions (Figure 2).

Functions Range from Student Financial Aid Administration to Data Collection

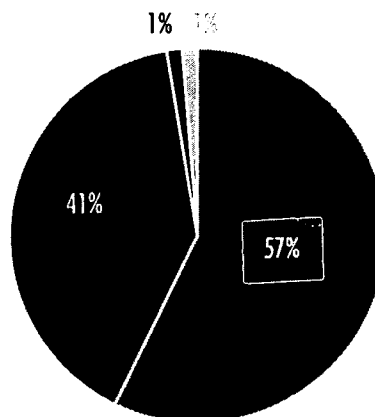
Administration of State's Student Financial Aid Programs

The Services Office each year awards about \$130 million in State Grants, \$12 million in State Work Study, and \$100 million in supplemental loans. Other programs include the Post-Secondary Child Care Grant Program, the Summer Scholarships for Academic Enrichment Program, and the Public Safety Officers' Survivors Benefit Program. The Services Office also oversees Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan, which began operation in September 2001.

Figure 1 Resources, Fiscal Year 2002

Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

■ General Fund	\$163,249,000
■ Loan Funds	114,800,000
■ Miscellaneous Revenue Fund and Special Revenue Fund	3,745,000
■ Federal Funds	3,910,000
Total	\$285,704,000

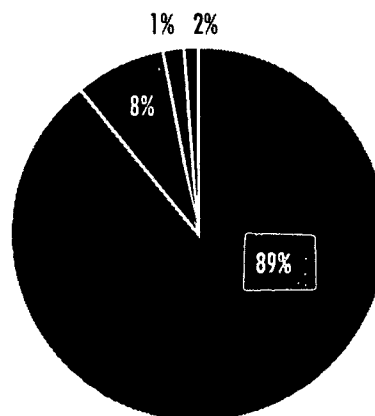


Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Figure 2 General Fund Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2002

Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

■ Grants to Students	\$145,573,000
■ Grants to Institutions	12,730,000
■ Salaries	1,994,000
■ Other	2,952,000
Total	\$163,249,000



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

*The Council
consists of
eight citizen
members and
one student.*

Negotiation and Administration of Statewide Interstate Tuition Reciprocity Programs

Minnesota has reciprocity programs with Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, and the Canadian province of Manitoba. Minnesota has a limited agreement with one Iowa institution. The Services Office helps facilitate administration of the Midwest Student Exchange Program through which some students are able to enroll in certain Midwestern institutions and programs at reduced tuition rates.

Publication and Distribution to Students and Parents of Information About Academic and Financial Preparation, Including Financial Aid

The Services Office accomplishes this with its web page, publications, and outreach to communities of color, low incomes, or families with no previous higher education experience. Early awareness efforts focus on low income students and their families.

Approval, Registration, and Licensure of Private Collegiate and Career Schools

Most private and out-of-state public institutions are required to be registered or licensed by the Services Office. Licensed institutions and institutions offering degrees are required to meet minimal standards, protect student records, and provide accurate and useful information to prospective and current students.

Oversight of Library Service Initiatives

The Services Office oversees the MINITEX Library Information Network, a publicly supported network of academic, public, state agency, and special libraries working cooperatively to improve library services for their users. The Office also has oversight for MnLINK, the statewide virtual library with a single access point to most major Minnesota library catalogs and state-licensed electronic resources.

Oversight of Higher Education Portion of Learning Network of Minnesota

The Services Office serves as the fiscal agent for the higher education portion of the Learning Network of Minnesota and helps staff the Minnesota Education Telecommunications Council, which provides statewide leadership

for the Network. The Network is the infrastructure to connect public campuses, schools, and libraries in order to expand access to educational programs and library resources.

Collection and Maintenance of Student Enrollment and Financial Aid Data

These data, which include both public and private post-secondary education data, are used to inform policymakers, the higher education community, and the public about trends and issues.

Administration of Federal and State Institution Grant Programs

These include statewide programs that support campus-community collaboration and service learning, and professional development for teachers.

Prescribe Policies, Procedures, and Rules Necessary to Administer the Programs Under Its Supervision

The Services Office is authorized to prescribe rules for the programs under its management.

Citizen Council Oversees Work of Services Office

A nine-member Higher Education Services Council oversees the work of the Office. The Council, appointed by the Governor, consists of eight citizen members and one student. Citizen members serve for six years and the student two years. No more than five members can be from the same political party. The Council is responsible for:

- appointing the director of the Services Office;
- reviewing the performance of the Services Office; and
- communicating and making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

The Council receives advice from two advisory bodies that are authorized in statute—the Student Advisory Council, which includes a student leader from each higher education sector or system; and the Higher Education Advisory Council, which includes the leaders of each of the systems or sectors.

Student Financing

Overview and Background:

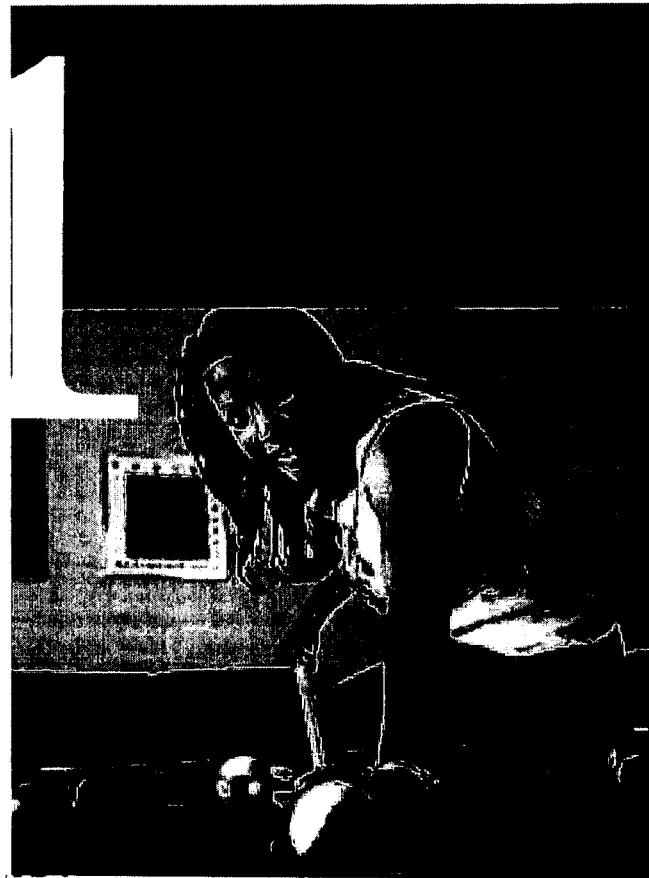
Education beyond high school is a sound investment for most students. Persons with more education typically earn more in the workplace. Education also helps develop civic, cultural, and social values that contribute to a higher quality of life for individuals who obtain the education and for society at large.

Post-secondary education, however, can be expensive. During the past two years, students attending Minnesota post-secondary institutions have experienced double-digit price increases. Tuition and fee prices have been increasing at a rate higher than other goods and services. Between academic years 1992-1993 and 2001-2002, resident undergraduate tuition and fees increased 67 percent at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, 56 percent at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' four-year institutions, 63 percent at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities' two-year institutions, and 58 percent at Minnesota Private College Council member institutions. Meanwhile, the Consumer Price Index increased 28 percent over the past 10 years for which data are available. Paying for the price of attendance takes proportionately more family resources from low and moderate income families than from higher income families.

Students and families have the primary responsibility for paying for post-secondary education in Minnesota. Financial aid programs help families draw upon past, current, and future income to pay for post-secondary education. Minnesota's Design for Shared Responsibility helps to mitigate the disproportionate post-secondary education price burden faced by low and moderate income families.

The Higher Education Services Office is committed to assuring that Minnesota students and families from all economic backgrounds have the opportunity to invest in and obtain a post-secondary education that best meets their needs. To that end, the Services Office administers the following major student and parent education financing programs (Table 1):

- Minnesota State Grant Program
- Minnesota Work Study Program
- Minnesota Post-Secondary Education Child Care Grant Program
- Student Educational Loan Fund
- Minnesota College Savings Plan
- Summer Scholarships Program
- Public Safety Officers' Survivors Program



Mona Abdel-Kerim

Goal: Middle School Math Teacher

Choice: Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Mona always knew she wanted to teach.

The education magnet at her high school helped prepare her and allowed her to gain hands-on classroom experience as a middle school teacher's assistant.

Her experiences led her to Minneapolis Community and Technical College's Urban Teachers Program and, through its internship requirement, to a paid teacher's assistant position with a program for disadvantaged youth.

She learned about her financial aid options from both her high school career center and the college's financial aid office. A combination of grants, scholarships, and loans helped Mona earn her associate degree. She plans to pursue a four-year degree in education.

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Section 1

Table 1 Minnesota Student Financing Programs

Program	Year Established	FY 2002 Spending	FY 2002 Participants
Minnesota State Grant Program	1969	\$125,000,000	71,274
Minnesota Work Study Program	1975	\$12,300,000	11,978
Minnesota Post-Secondary Education Child Care Grant Program	1989	\$4,600,000	2,429
Student Educational Loan Fund (SELF)	1983	\$104,000,000	28,000
Minnesota College Savings Plan (MCSP)*	1997	\$70,174,000	16,488
Summer Scholarships Program	1985	\$191,125	293
Public Safety Officers' Survivors Program	1992	\$38,191	11

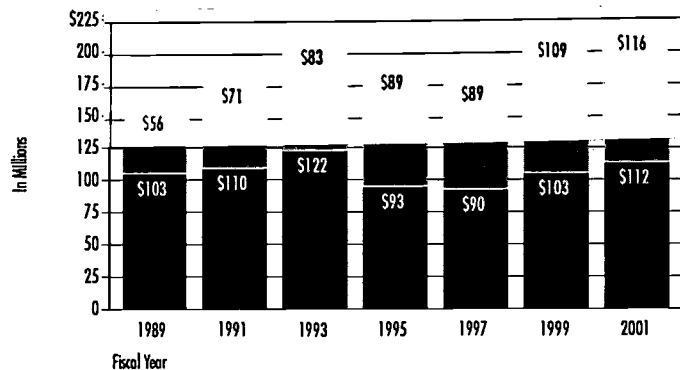
* Total assets and accounts as of November 8, 2002.

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Figure 3 Federal Pell Grants and Minnesota State Grants

Students Attending Minnesota Institutions, Selected Years

■ Federal Pell Grant
■ Minnesota State Grant



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Highlights:

Design for Shared Responsibility Reduces Post-Secondary Education Financial Responsibility for Low and Moderate Income Families

Minnesota's Design for Shared Responsibility divides the undergraduate recognized price of attendance among students, families, and, if necessary, taxpayers. Students have responsi-

bility for 46 percent of the recognized price of attendance. The remaining 54 percent of the recognized price of attendance is assigned to families and, if necessary, taxpayers. Taxpayers assist families who are judged unable to pay for all or a portion of the remaining 54 percent of the recognized price of attendance. Minnesota's Design for Shared Responsibility coordinates the Federal Pell Grant Program and the Minnesota State Grant Program in assisting families. Federal Pell Grant funds are counted before state taxpayer contributions are made through the Minnesota State Grant Program. The policy goals in this approach are 1) to leverage federal contributions first and 2) to avoid "unmet" need in state financial aid policy by fully covering the remaining 54 percent of the price of attendance with contributions from families and/or taxpayers.

The 2001 Minnesota Legislature adopted several significant policy initiatives, including an extension of State Grant eligibility to the equivalent of five years of enrollment, use of actual tuition and fees in determining the price of attendance for calculating State Grants, and a reduction in the Assigned Family Responsibility for all independent students.

- Low and moderate income families had their share of the recognized price of attendance reduced by \$228 million in Fiscal Year 2001 through Federal Pell and Minnesota State Grants, as shown in Figure 3.

- Undergraduate Minnesota residents attending 121 Minnesota post-secondary institutions received \$115.7 million in Fiscal Year 2001 and \$125.6 million in Fiscal Year 2002 in State Grant awards.
- A total of 65,246 low and moderate income students in Fiscal Year 2001 and 71,274 students in Fiscal Year 2002 had their financial responsibility reduced with a Minnesota State Grant.
- A total of 87 percent of Minnesota State Grant awards in Fiscal Year 2002 went to families with Federal Adjusted Gross Incomes below \$50,000, as illustrated in Figure 4.
- A total of 91 percent of combined Federal Pell and Minnesota State Grant awards in Fiscal Year 2002 were made to families with Adjusted Gross Incomes below \$50,000.

Minnesota Work Study Provides Current Income for Students to Help Meet Their Assigned Student Responsibilities

Campus jobs have been shown to be an effective incentive for students to progress toward a post-secondary education certificate or degree.

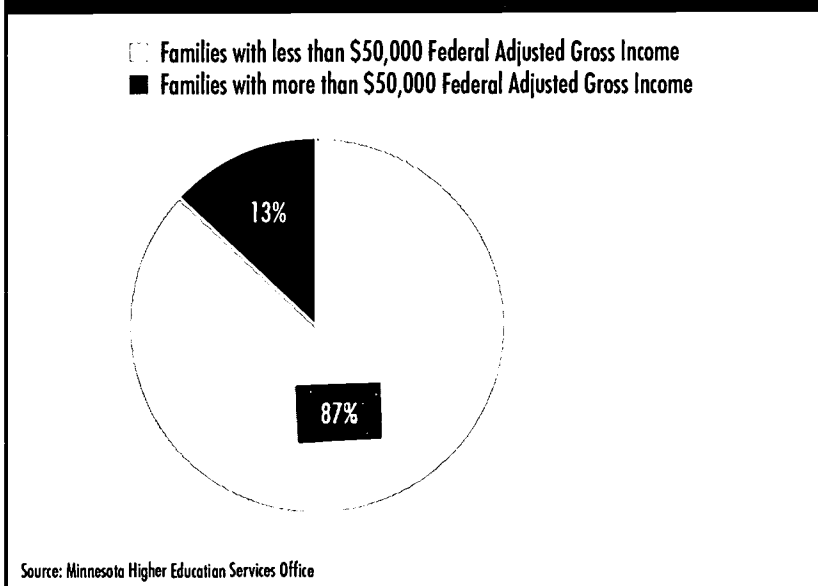
- A total of 11,978 students in Fiscal Year 2002 were employed through the Minnesota Work Study Program.
- The State Work Study Program provided \$12.3 million in employment compensation to students in Fiscal Year 2002.
- In Fiscal Year 2003, as required by law, the entire \$12.4 million program appropriation was moved to the State Grant Program to help make full State Grant awards.

Child Care Grants Expand Educational Opportunities for Parents

The Post-Secondary Education Child Care Grant Program provides students who have children 12 and under assistance to help pay for child care. The 2001 Legislature increased the maximum award per child to \$2,600.

- In Fiscal Year 2002, 2,429 students were assisted in obtaining child care for their dependents with \$4.6 million in Child Care Grants.

Figure 4 Minnesota State Grant Awards in Fiscal Year 2002



- The program appropriation of \$4.7 million per year was reduced to \$1.1 million in order to help fund the projected State Grant shortfall in Fiscal Year 2003.

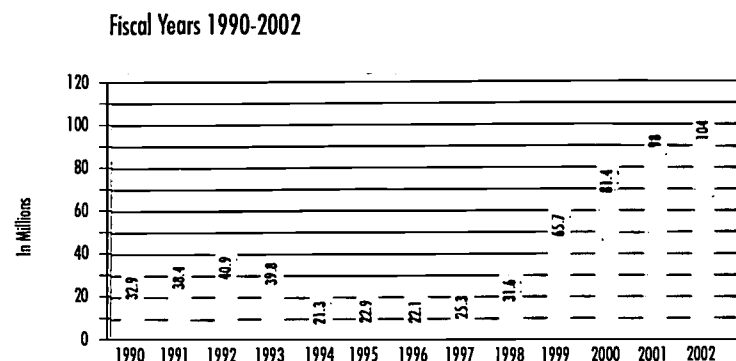
SELF Loan Program Provides Competitive Loan Capital to Students Who Choose to Use Future Income to Meet Their Assigned Student Responsibilities

The Student Educational Loan Fund (SELF), administered by the Services Office, provides an alternative source of loan capital to assist students to invest in post-secondary education now and pay for it later.

- In January 2002, the Services Office completed the sale of \$95.3 million in revenue bonds which includes \$68.2 million in taxable revenue bonds and \$27.1 million in tax-exempt revenue bonds to generate funds for SELF loans.
- Since 1989, students have borrowed \$646 million with 202,100 SELF loans, as shown in Figure 5.
- In Fiscal Year 2002, the Services Office made 28,353 SELF loans totaling \$104 million.

Section 1

Figure 5 Student Educational Loan Fund (SELF) Loans Disbursed



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Table 2 Minnesota College Savings Plan Participation

Cumulative summary of program activity

Quarter Ending	Total Assets	Total Accounts
12/31/01	\$13,756,686	4,036
3/29/02	\$34,991,790	9,635
6/28/02	\$49,845,101	12,874
9/30/02	\$59,066,964	15,488

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Minnesota College Savings Plan Provides Opportunity for Families to Prepare Financially

*Initiatives
increase
efficiency of
financial aid
administration.*

Minnesota's 529 College Savings Plan provides an opportunity for individuals to contribute to state-directed college savings accounts. Earnings are exempt from federal and state taxes if used for qualified higher education expenses. The state of Minnesota provides an annual matching grant to Minnesota families with Adjusted Gross Incomes under \$80,000 who make a minimum contribution of \$200; the maximum annual match is \$300.

- The Minnesota College Savings Plan was launched in September 2001 and during the first year, more than 15,000 accounts

were opened with total assets exceeding \$59 million.

- The average account size without the matching grant was \$4,007; the average account size with the matching grant was \$3,814.
- As of November 8, 2002, the program had 16,488 accounts with more than \$70 million in assets.

Services Office Increases Efficiency of Financial Aid Program Administration

The Services Office has increased the efficiency of its program administration through several initiatives. Following are some examples:

- The Services Office, in conjunction with the Minnesota Association of Financial Aid Administrators (MAFAA), designed an **interactive web training program** to educate all financial aid administrators about policies and procedures to be used in awarding State Grants. Before, the Services Office provided monthly training to about 40 administrators per session. **Total savings exceed \$50,000 annually.** This includes about \$48,000 for campuses based on 40 staff days over 10 months and about \$4,000 for the Services Office due to less preparation and direct training time.
- The Services Office now posts its **Financial Aid Procedures Manual on the Internet** so aid administrators can query the manual electronically or print only the pages needed at that time for documentation. **Total savings are estimated at \$4,600** for printing, postage, and staff time.
- Materials for the annual high school counselor financial aid training workshop are now posted online** so counselors can receive the information more quickly and, if they cannot attend the workshop, still have access. **Savings total about \$5,800** for printing, postage, and staff time.
- The Services Office allows colleges to request that **student status reports be printed to their campus printers** instead of waiting for the Services Office to print reports on-site and package and mail them to the campus.

The Office saves about \$3,000 in printing, postage, and staff time. Campuses receive reports overnight, and students can clear up eligibility issues more quickly.

- The Office allows financial aid funds to be sent and received between institutions and the Services Office using **Electronic Funds Transfer**. The service reduces the time needed for funds to reach campus and the time for funds to reach students. Printing and check processing costs for both the Services Office and post-secondary institutions are reduced. **Total savings are estimated at \$30,000.**
- The Services Office has implemented several steps to ensure timely reporting of financial aid fund balances and improve cash management of the programs. For example:
 - An internal team collects and analyzes monthly spending data and expenditure projections.
 - Only institutions that prove they are ready and able to communicate with the Services Office electronically are sent their initial allocation. Funds are no longer being sent to them automatically at the beginning of each year.
 - No State Grant fund advances are made to schools unless they meet reporting requirements.
 - An institution's initial request for State Grant funds is adjusted based on its historical use of funds each year.

a State Grant deficiency of \$16 million and transferred to the State Grant account the entire \$12.4 million State Work Study appropriation and \$3.6 million of the \$4.7 million Child Care Grant appropriation.

In order to help low and moderate income students keep pace with price increases so they can begin or continue to attend post-secondary education, the Services Office is recommending an increase of \$61 million in State Grants for the 2004-2005 biennium. These funds would provide for a base adjustment to reflect the increased demand for grants; support grant awards that reflect anticipated increases in tuition and fees charged by Minnesota institutions; and provide inflation adjustments for the Living and Miscellaneous Expense Allowance, tuition and fee maximums, and Child Care Grants.

Further Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Data on Enrollments and Financing," then "Student Financing." Also see "Financial Aid Program Administration."

*Increased
demand
placed on
State Grant
Program.*

Outlook:

During the past year, demand for need-based financial assistance has increased significantly as more and more Minnesotans are participating in post-secondary education, applying and qualifying for grants. The combination of record enrollments, the effects of the economy on families, and double-digit price increases are placing increased pressure on the State Grant Program funding despite supplemental appropriations by the 2002 Legislature. Similar pressures are affecting the Federal Pell Grant Program.

The Services Office is required by law to make full State Grant awards. As directed by the 2002 Minnesota Legislature, the Services Office at the start of Fiscal Year 2003 projected

Student Tuition Reciprocity

Overview and Background:

"The purpose of tuition reciprocity is the mutual improvement of educational advantages for the residents of Minnesota and other states or provinces with whom agreements are made" (*Minnesota Statutes* 136A.08).

Tuition reciprocity enhances student access to and choice among public post-secondary education institutions in the participating states by eliminating non-resident admission barriers and reducing non-resident tuition prices.

Minnesota's tuition reciprocity agreements are negotiated and administered by the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office. The agreements require approval by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees. Table 3 provides an overview of Minnesota's agreements.

Students and taxpayers share financial responsibility for tuition reciprocity. Minnesota's agreements with Wisconsin and North Dakota require each state to pay for the marginal instructional costs associated with its residents attending eligible institutions in the other state. Marginal instructional costs are defined as 64 percent of instructional costs. The basic tuition reciprocity financial calculation is:

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Total number of student credits} \\ &\times \text{Marginal instructional costs} \\ &= \text{Gross state financial obligation} \\ &- \text{Student paid tuition} \\ &= \text{Net state financial obligation} \end{aligned}$$

Marginal instructional costs are determined by the state educating the greater number of students. Undergraduate reciprocity tuition rates are set to minimize price incentives or disincentives for students to stay or leave their state of residence.

Highlights:

Student Participation

- Student participation in tuition reciprocity has steadily increased. Between fall 2000 and fall 2001, the number of students participating in tuition reciprocity increased by 1,107. More than 39,000 tuition reciprocity students were enrolled in the participating states in fall 2001, as seen in Figure 6. This number reflects over 21,000 Minnesota resident reciprocity students and nearly 18,000 residents of the other participating jurisdictions. Reciprocity enrollment at selected institutions is shown in Figure 7.

Interstate Payments

- Minnesota's general fund tuition reciprocity obligation has decreased because Minnesota reciprocity students pay an increasing share of tuition reciprocity marginal instructional costs. For academic year 2001-2002, Wisconsin's net state financial obligation to Minnesota was \$20,895,355, and Minnesota's net state

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Justin Anker

Goal: Counselor or Psychiatrist

Choice: College of Menominee Nation and University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Justin knew he needed to explore his options to help pay for college.

He talked to people he knew and used the Internet to learn more about state and federal financial aid programs. He attended the College of Menominee Nation in Keshena, Wisconsin his first year and then transferred to the University of Minnesota.

A Wisconsin resident, he uses reciprocity and the Student Educational Loan Fund (SELF) program to help pay for his education while he works toward a major in psychology and minor in political science.

Justin is a sophomore and plans to attend graduate school after he receives his bachelor's degree.

Table 3 History and Overview of Tuition Reciprocity

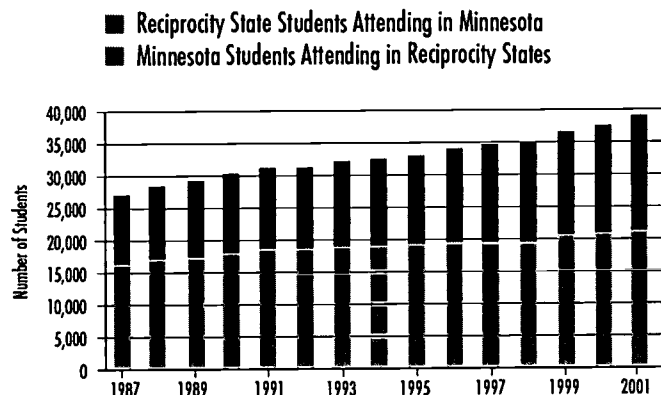
Agreement	Start	Institutions and Programs
Minnesota/Wisconsin	Academic Year 1968-69	All public institutions and programs of study except medicine, veterinary medicine, and dentistry.
Minnesota/North Dakota	Academic Year 1975-76	All public institutions and programs of study.
Minnesota/South Dakota	Academic Year 1978-79	All public institutions and programs of study.
Minnesota/Iowa	Academic Year 1978-79	Limited to Iowa Lakes Community College and Minnesota West Community and Technical College.
Minnesota/Manitoba	Academic Year 1989-90	All public institutions and programs of study.

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

financial obligation to Wisconsin was \$20,592,614. The difference between the two net state financial obligations resulted in Wisconsin paying Minnesota \$302,741. Financial obligations under the Minnesota/North Dakota agreement for academic year 2001-2002 resulted in Minnesota paying North Dakota \$127,850 from Fiscal Year 2003 funds. Net payments over time are shown in Figure 8.

Efficient Application Process

The Higher Education Services Office initiated an **online tuition reciprocity application** to facilitate student participation. Today, about 60 percent of Minnesota tuition reciprocity students apply online. Students who graduated from a Minnesota high school within the previous 12 months and have a Minnesota address receive immediate verification that they qualify. College personnel can direct potentially eligible reciprocity students to apply online so the colleges can complete their financial aid packages promptly. Avoiding paper applications reduces the Higher Education Services Office's data entry and evaluation time and eliminates printing and mailing award notices to students and institutions. Compared with the paper application process, **online tuition reciprocity applications save the Services Office nearly \$26,000 annually.**

Figure 6 Reciprocity Fall Headcount Enrollment, 1987-2001

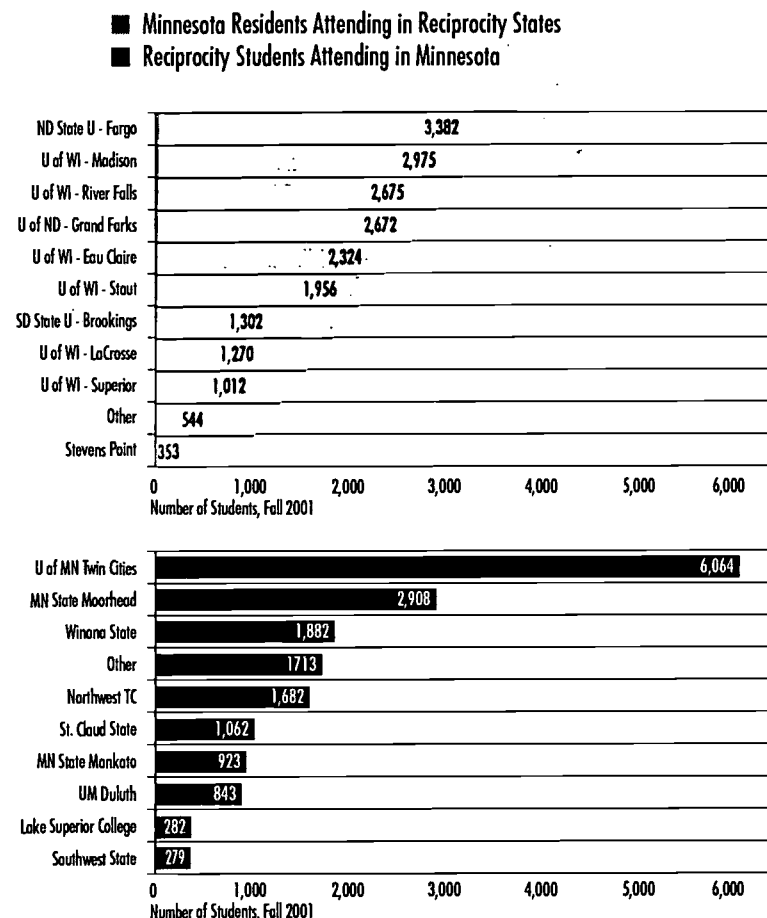
Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Outlook:

Minnesota's tuition reciprocity agreements continue to expand student access to and choice among post-secondary education opportunities, as evidenced by increasing student participation. Minnesota's agreements with Wisconsin and North Dakota represent over \$150 million in instructional activity. This cost is shared by students and taxpayers, and tuition reciprocity interstate payments recently have represented less

Section 2

Figure 7 Tuition Reciprocity Fall 2002 Headcount Enrollment at Selected Institutions



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

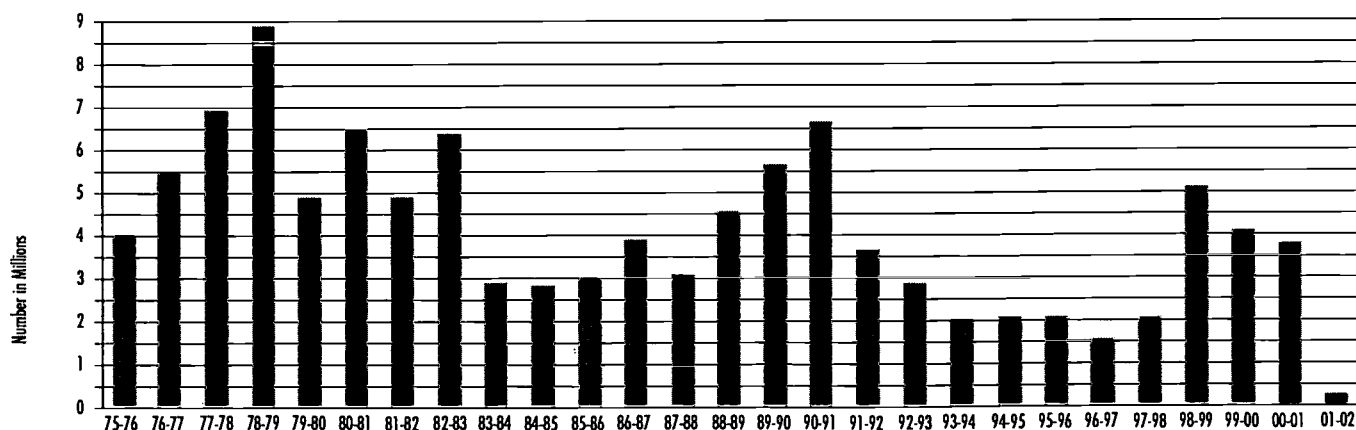
than three percent of student instructional costs. Even so, year-to-year changes in marginal instructional costs, tuition paid, and credits taken by students can be significant. During the 2002-2003 biennium, Minnesota's interstate tuition reciprocity payments were less than projected primarily because of changes in student credit consumption and tuition. As a result, the 2002 Legislature reduced the biennial appropriation for reciprocity, and the Services Office transferred some of the original reciprocity appropriation to help fund a shortfall in State Grants. Data from fall term 2002 will be needed to further develop and refine interstate tuition reciprocity projections for the 2004-2005 biennium.

For More Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Data on Enrollments and Financing," then "Student Financing," then "Tuition Reciprocity."

Figure 8 Tuition Reciprocity Interstate Payments: Minnesota Net Payments, 1975-1976 through 2001-2002



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Student and Parent Information

Overview and Background:

The Higher Education Services Office provides information to help students and parents learn about and prepare for educational opportunities beyond high school. Research studies indicate that many families lack information about financial and academic preparation; for example, they misperceive the price of attending colleges, and know little about financial aid. Without reliable, timely information, families may make ill-informed decisions or rule out higher education altogether.

The Services Office is required by statute (*Minnesota Statutes* 136A.87) to make available to all residents from eighth grade through adulthood information about planning and preparing for post-secondary opportunities. Information is provided to students and parents throughout Minnesota, school counselors, other educators, and interested citizens. Information is provided to adults beginning or returning to higher education. The Office seeks to provide a continuum of information and service to residents from early grades to and through post-secondary education.

Of particular concern is the need to provide information to students from low income families, of color, and little or no higher education experience. These students complete high school and participate in higher education at much lower rates than their counterparts from more affluent, highly educated backgrounds. They face substantial financial, academic, social, and cultural obstacles to higher education.

A variety of approaches are used to convey information. They include the agency web site, publications, videos, the State Fair, and presentations as well as outreach to students and families at schools, colleges, and community locations. Table 4 summarizes student and parent information strategies.

The Services Office began providing information about financial access to families in the 1970s, paralleling the growth of state and federal financial aid programs. Specific legislative initiatives in the 1980s directed the agency to provide information to all eighth grade students and parents. The Get Ready! early awareness program was started in 1996, with a small federal grant, in response to a study by the Wilder Research Foundation; the study concluded that parents and students be provided information at an early age—elementary school years. The Minnesota Legislature provided funds to expand the Get Ready! program in 1997 and to start the Intervention for College Attendance Program in 1999. In 1999, the Services Office received federal funds to support Get Ready! under the new Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). The Services Office received a Youth Works AmeriCorps/Get Ready! program grant in 2000.



Neal Crisp

Goal: To help people by understanding how society works

Choice: Century College

By eighth grade, Neal was suffering academically in most subjects, especially those requiring concise linear thinking. He soon found out he had a learning disability.

A combination of private tutoring and part-time special education study in high school helped him succeed at his own pace.

He earned both high school and college credit by taking classes at Century College through the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options Program. Neal used the resources of his special education program to explore financial aid options and now studies cultural anthropology at Century College.

After he receives his associate degree, he plans to continue his education at a four-year school.

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Section 3

Table 4 Student/Parent Information Strategies

Strategy	Key Products	Distribution
Inform all parents	<i>Get Ready for Your Child's Higher Education</i> magazine and summaries	100,000
Inform low income elementary-aged school children	<i>Financing Your Future, What Will I Be?</i> , and <i>The Great College Mystery</i> workbooks	5,000
Encourage planning by eighth grade students	<i>Future Choices</i> magazine and video, teacher and student curricula; and <i>Youniversity</i> magazine	90,000
Inform families about financial aid	<i>Focus on Financial Aid</i> magazine and summaries	140,000
Provide high school counselors with resources	<i>Counselor's Guide (Minnesota Post-Secondary Education: A Guide for Counselors)</i>	700
Inform adults beginning or returning to school	<i>For Adults Beginning or Returning to Higher Education</i>	3,000
Help students evaluate education programs and schools	<i>Is This a Good School?</i>	5,000

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Highlights:

Future Choices Helps Middle School Students Prepare for Their Futures

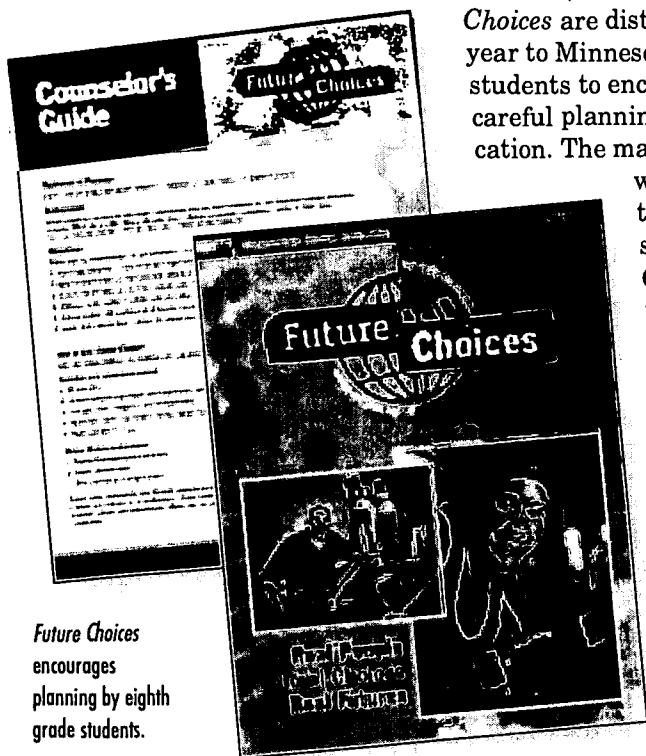
About 90,000 copies of *Future Choices* are distributed each year to Minnesota middle school students to encourage early, careful planning for future education. The major focus is on what classes to take in high school. *Future Choices* underwent a minor redesign in 2002, introducing new Minnesota college students who talk candidly about how they overcame difficulties to reach their college dreams. A mini-assessment, cour-

tesy of *Minnesota Careers*, also was added to the magazine. An educator's guide and a quiz to test for retention of key concepts continue to complement the magazine.

A survey of school counselors in 2001-2002 found that 74 percent were "very satisfied" with the *Future Choices* materials and 25 percent "somewhat satisfied." Sixty-three percent found the information on careers "very useful," and 58 percent indicated the information on recommended high school classes "very useful." (Tables 5 and 6)

Get Ready Helps Families Plan Academically and Financially

Get Ready for Your Child's Higher Education, centerpiece of the parent information project, is distributed to about 100,000 parents each year. About 80,000 go to 1,200 schools for distribution to parents of fifth grade students. Fully redesigned in 2001, the magazine includes information on promoting learning at home, higher education options, the price of education and financial aid, and federal and state tax benefits and savings incentives for college. A brochure version in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali was introduced in 2002. Outreach efforts have been expanded to include community organizations that serve students and parents.



Future Choices encourages planning by eighth grade students.

Guide Informs Counselors About Post-Secondary Education Opportunities

The *Counselor's Guide*, a three-ring binder with information about post-secondary education admission requirements and programs, is provided free each fall to Minnesota high schools. About 250 additional copies were purchased the past two years by other organizations, colleges, and community organizations. In a 2002 survey of counselors, 62 percent said they were "very satisfied" and 38 percent said they were "somewhat satisfied" with the *Guide*.

Brochure Helps Students Evaluate Education Programs and Schools

Almost 5,000 copies of the *Is This a Good School?* brochure were distributed in 2002 through the Services Office State Fair booth, conferences, and individual requests received by telephone or the agency web site. The brochure describes strategies for students to evaluate the quality of educational programs and schools in Minnesota. The brochure was redesigned in 2002 and expanded to include information on how to evaluate online distance education opportunities.

Services Office Collaborates with Minnesota Careers

The Services Office continues its three-year collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Economic Security's *Minnesota Careers* publication which is published annually. In addition to updating information on preparing for college and financial aid, the Services Office also provided financial support for the 2001-2002 edition.

Web Site Expands Access to Information for Families and Educators

The Services Office has expanded its web resources for students, parents, and educators. In 2001, an educator's guide was added to the web site to assist the efforts of counselors and teachers in helping students and parents understand post-secondary education opportunities and financial aid. Also added was a new section on selecting a college and a section on early awareness efforts. In 2002, access to all student, parent, and educator publications expanded

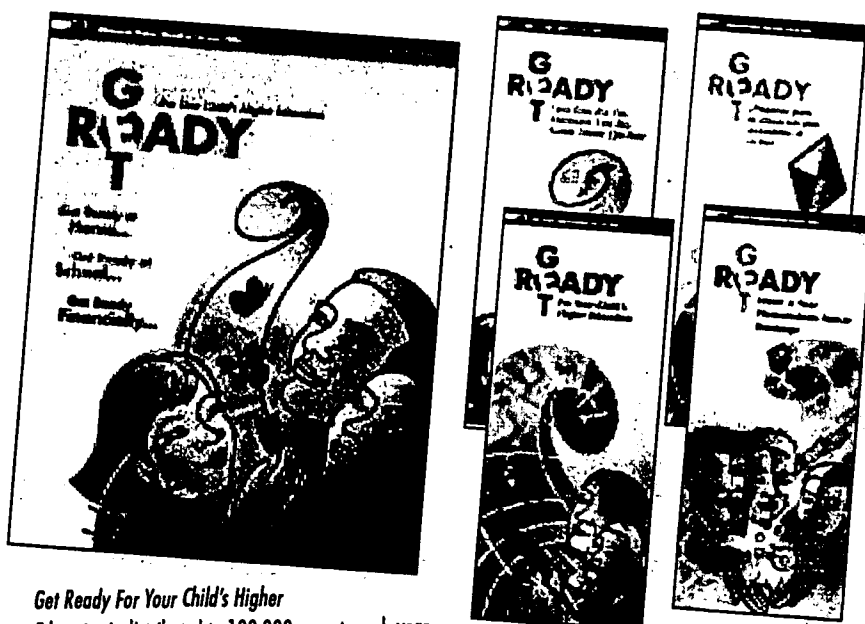
Table 5 Future Choices for 8th Graders: Survey of Counselors

71 Responses

Overall Satisfaction, 2001-2002 edition

Very Satisfied	74%
Somewhat Satisfied	25%
Dissatisfied	1%

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office



Get Ready! For Your Child's Higher Education is distributed to 100,000 parents each year. Summary publications have been translated into Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.



Get Ready! Gazette is distributed to *Get Ready!* students and their families four times a year to help inform them about program activities.

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Focus on Financial Aid publications contain information about paying for college. Summary versions are available in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

through the use of downloadable PDFs and an online publication request form.

Financing presentations open to the public are listed online and the annual Statewide Financial Aid Conference used online registration and downloadable conference materials. Also in 2002, the entire student and parent information material on preparing for college was reworked and expanded.

The web site continues to inform families on college prices, financial aid, tax credits and savings incentives, and tuition reciprocity.

Hits to the Services

Office web site have almost tripled since 2000. From July 2002 through October 2002 alone, the web site received more than 153,000 hits—more than the total number of hits for all of 2000. During the same period in 2002, the most fre-

quently visited student, parent, or educator pages were Paying for College (8,169 hits), Online SELF Counseling (5,103 hits), Online Tuition Reciprocity Application (4,982 hits), Financial Aid (4,267 hits), and the Services Office online Financial Aid Estimator (3,909 hits).

Information on Financing Post-Secondary Education Expanded

The Services Office continues to expand its communication of information about paying for college. Each year, about 140,000 copies of *Focus on Financial Aid* are distributed to students and parents at schools, the State Fair, and other locations. A summary version is available in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali.

The Services Office provides free presentations on financing to groups of students and parents. In 2001-2002, presentations were provided to 2,235 people at a variety of locations,

including public, private, and charter schools, community organizations, churches, and community education programs. Further efforts to promote financial preparation for college have occurred in conjunction with the launch of the Minnesota College Savings Plan in September 2001. In March 2002, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. and the Services Office co-sponsored a special section in *Mpls. St. Paul Magazine* for parents on "Building a College Student: Success Starts Early."

Early Awareness Programs Expand Information to Students and Parents

The early awareness programs administered by the Services Office provide information about planning and preparing for education beyond high school to thousands of students and their parents in Minnesota.

During 2001-2002, for example, Get Ready! staff worked with more than 1,000 low income students on a one-on-one or small group basis to provide them mentoring and tutoring and the information to plan for higher education. In addition, about 5,000 students received College Planning Presentations in their classrooms, and 20,000 students saw a theatre production focusing on early college awareness and planning.

The scope of academic support to students was expanded. About 450 Get Ready! students received tutoring, either through the Get Ready! program itself or non-Get Ready! tutoring at their schools. This was made possible by the successful implementation of the College Corps, in which the program hires, trains, and mentors college students, primarily on State Work Study, to tutor children in the program. More than 50 college students served the program in 2001-2002. Evaluation results indicated that the students tutored in reading increased their test scores significantly between the fall and winter terms. Further academic support is provided by members of the agency's AmeriCorps program, which supplements Get Ready! program activity.

Academic support also is provided through summer programming. In summer 2002, 83 Get Ready! students in fourth through sixth grade attended the program's first summer camp at St. John's University in Collegeville. A key aspect of the camp was the use of the Exchange

City curriculum. Students learned about different jobs and, on the last camp day, performed those jobs at Exchange City in Maplewood. In addition to attending the St. John's camp, 94 Get Ready! students attended a Minnesota Minority Education Partnership Inc., camp, and 24 Get Ready! students attended camps not listed in the annual MMEP Summer Enrichment Guide. Another 38 Get Ready! students attended the Get Ready! summer Lego camps in Cloquet.

Services Office staff continued to update and enhance the core curriculum which focuses on self-esteem, goal setting, early career awareness, financing higher education opportunities, and college opportunities. A video for parents was completed in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali, to inform parents about higher education and the Get Ready! program for their children.

An annual Get Ready! survey of educators has produced positive results, as seen in Table 8. **In the 2002 survey of educators, 62 percent "strongly agreed" that participation in Get Ready! helps students plan academically and financially for college; 55 percent "strongly agreed" that participation in Get Ready! helps motivate students to graduate from high school and attend college.** In an end-of-year survey, **92 percent of Get Ready! participants "agreed" that the program helped them know the ways to pay for college; 91 percent "agreed" that the program taught them the importance of going to college; and 96 percent said they would like to be in Get Ready! next year** (Table 7). Surveys of students and parents indicate that after participating in the program for at least a year, students know much more than initially about ways to pay for college, what classes to take in high school, and the prices of attending specific types of colleges.

Over the last two program years of the Office's **Youth Works AmeriCorps/Get Ready! Program**, more than 60 AmeriCorps members have provided tutoring, mentoring, and post-secondary career, and life planning information to more than 1,000 students and their families in the Twin Cities, Duluth, Cloquet, and Proctor.

Table 6 Future Choices Survey of Counselors, 2001-2002 Usefulness of Information

71 Responses

Item	Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know
Financial Aid	29%	58%	7%	6%
High School Classes	58%	38%	0%	4%
Colleges	51%	43%	3%	3%
Careers	63%	36%	1%	0%

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Table 7 Get Ready! Program Student Evaluation, 2001-2002

210 responses

Get Ready!	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree
Taught me the importance of going to college	91%	7%	2%
Helped me learn about careers	86%	13%	1%
Encouraged me to do well in my school work	65%	29%	6%
Encouraged me to go to school every day	63%	28%	9%
Helped me understand what college campuses look like	66%	29%	5%
Taught me where to find more information about careers and education	75%	21%	4%
Helped me know how much it costs to go to different colleges	80%	17%	3%
Helped me know the ways to pay for college	92%	6%	2%
Helped me with my school work	33%	46%	21%
Taught me why it is important to set and achieve goals	85%	13%	2%

Would you like to be in Get Ready! again next year? Yes=96%

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

For the 2002-2003 biennium, the Services Office renewed 10 grants to post-secondary institutions and community agencies under the **Intervention for College Attendance Program**. The purpose of the program is to help low income students reach the doors of post-secondary education by expanding the capacity of current, successful, early intervention programs and encouraging the enhancement of services provided by the programs.

Section 3

Table 8 Get Ready! Program Educator Evaluation , 2001-2002

29 responses

Get Ready!	Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Blank
Helps students and families become aware of and plan for their future educational options	51%	30%	19%	--	--	--
Helps improve student attendance	21%	38%	21%	3%	3%	14%
Helps students improve in class	31%	42%	17%	7%	--	3%
Helps students plan academically and financially for college	62%	31%	7%	--	--	--
Helps motivate students to graduate from high school and attend college	55%	38%	7%	--	--	--

Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Research reports support need for early awareness efforts.

Low income students receive services such as mentoring, tutoring, information about college options, parental involvement, and summer academic enrichment. **In 2001-2002, about 2,000 students participated in the programs.** Due to state budget reductions, funding for grants in Fiscal Year 2003 was reduced from \$500,000 to \$200,000.

In October 2002, more than 150 people participated in the **Third Early Awareness Collaboration Conference** at Metropolitan State University. Co-sponsors were the Services Office, the Center for Community-Based Learning at Metropolitan State University, the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership, Inc., and TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. The conference was designed to facilitate discussion and collaboration on how to enhance and expand efforts to help low income students aspire to, plan for, participate and succeed in all levels of their education to and through post-secondary education.

Outlook:

Given changing demographics statewide and significant gaps in educational achievement and participation among Minnesotans, there is a strong need to inform students and parents about educational opportunities, encourage their participation, and help them prepare to succeed academically. Continued and/or expand-

ed service for these efforts depends in large part on the availability of federal and state funding. Some state budget reductions for early awareness already are occurring in Fiscal Year 2003.

The need for student and parent information was underscored by two research reports during the past two years. One report found that due to high dropout rates at the high school level, low college participation rates and low college graduation rates, Minnesota education institutions and communities are preparing only a fraction of all potential students of color for Minnesota's workforce (*The State of Students of Color 2001*, Minnesota Minority Education Partnership Inc.). While Minnesota seeks to provide access to post-secondary education for all its citizens, significant gaps in college participation exist between students and families with limited financial means and those with higher incomes (*Post-Secondary Education Choices of the Minnesota High School Class of 1999*, Minnesota Higher Education Services Office and Department of Children, Families & Learning, November 2001).

For More Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Preparing for College," then "Selecting a College," then "Paying for College."

MINITEX Library Information Network

Overview and Background:

MINITEX's mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of libraries by expanding their access to information resources for their users. It provides students, faculty, and other Minnesota residents with access to information and resources held by libraries in Minnesota, as well as North and South Dakota and Wisconsin.

MINITEX fulfills its objective through four primary activities: 1) document delivery; 2) discounted group licenses for online access to full-text and bibliographic resources; 3) a common database of books and non-print holdings through online shared cataloging; and 4) a union list of serial holdings (journals and magazines) of participating libraries. MINITEX also provides cooperative purchasing for all types of libraries, periodical exchange, and back-up reference service when libraries do not have local resources to answer requests from Minnesota residents. Its services benefit not only more than 280,000 students and faculty of the University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Minnesota private colleges but also residents around the state.

Highlights:

Now in its 33rd year of operation, the MINITEX Library Information Network (MINITEX) is a publicly-supported network of libraries in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. In Minnesota, MINITEX serves over 1,400 academic, state government, K-12, and public libraries which in turn serve all Minnesota residents. Under a separate arrangement, MINITEX resources are also shared reciprocally with libraries in Wisconsin.

In Fiscal Year 2002:

- Minnesota residents gained access to more than 383,000 books, articles, and non-print materials through MINITEX and 3.5 million full-text articles and books accessed electronically from user workstations (Figures 11 and 12).
- MINITEX transmitted over 17,000 articles electronically to the desktops of students and faculty.
- MINITEX provided students, faculty, and residents access to more than 8,000 electronic books in their homes, offices, or dorm rooms.
- The electronic resources licensed for statewide access, called the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM), provided online access to full text magazines and reference resources for post-secondary and K-12 students, faculty, teachers, and staff as well as the general public (Figures 9 and 10).
- MINITEX additionally licensed access to online resources in nursing, science, engineering and other disciplines for students, faculty, and staff at Minnesota's colleges and universities.
- Minnesota residents accessed more than 7.8 million items through



Matt Davis

Goal: Social Studies Teacher

Choice: Fergus Falls Community College
and Augsburg College

Matt was more into sports than education, but knew he'd need to go to college to make it to the NBA.

He hung out with people who wanted to go to college and refocused his efforts on his schoolwork. He also listened when his high school discussed education options and ways to pay for college.

Matt enrolled at Fergus Falls Community College and, two years later, was recruited to play basketball at Augsburg College. He worked at a local Boys & Girls Club to help pay for college and earned an education service award through the Service Office's AmeriCorps program.

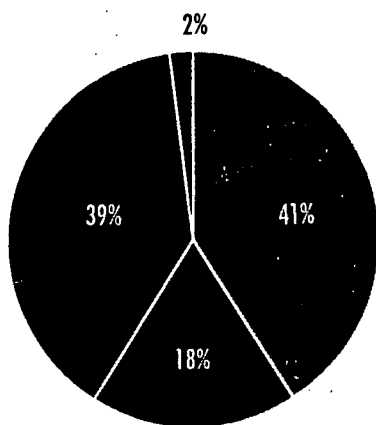
Financial aid like the federal Pell Grant made it possible. Without it, he knows he wouldn't have gone at all.

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Section 4

Figure 9 Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) Usage: Searches Fiscal Year 2002

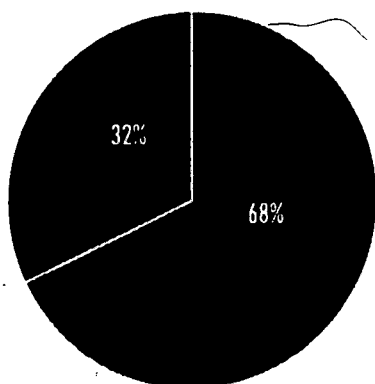
- Academic libraries
- Public Libraries
- Schools K-12 Libraries
- Special/State Government Libraries



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Figure 10 Cost of Licenses for Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) Fiscal Year 2003

■ Minnesota Higher Education Services Office	\$831,966
■ Children, Families, & Learning	\$400,000
Total	\$1,231,966



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

online indices, web resources, full-text journal articles, a world wide library catalog, and other reference resources.

- MINITEX processed over 200,000 volumes into the Minnesota Library Access Center from the Minneapolis Public Library and the University of Minnesota campuses in the Twin Cities and Duluth.

These efforts have resulted in savings and greater efficiency for Minnesotans.

For example:

- The University of Minnesota and Minneapolis Public Library existing collections are leveraged by sharing over 147,000 interlibrary loans and photocopies with residents.
- The MINITEX Delivery System saved time and shipping costs for sharing materials among libraries.
- Students and faculty have direct access to thousands of full-text articles in magazines and journals that they can read or print at their workstations.
- The MINITEX licensed electronic resources provide some of the most powerful research tools available today, available 24 hours a day in the homes or offices of registered patrons of participating libraries.
- Substantial savings for higher education libraries occur through MINITEX. Statewide licensing and cooperative purchasing of electronic resources paid for by individual libraries achieve economies of scale and lower subscription prices.
- Students in K-12 systems, the future college students, gain early exposure and usage of high quality reference sources that are accurate, relevant and timely—enhancing learning throughout Minnesota.

Outlook:

The entire MINITEX appropriation is for contracted services provided by MINITEX at the University of Minnesota. The University of Minnesota provides space and related physical plant and administrative support services without charge to MINITEX.

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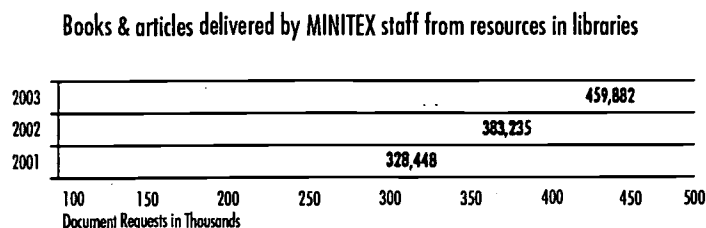
Additional revenue is generated from contracts with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning, the North Dakota State Library, and the South Dakota State Library. All funds are passed by the Services Office directly to MINITEX at the University of Minnesota. Revenue is also generated by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) online cataloging service in which the revenue is received from libraries using OCLC services through the MINITEX office and passed directly to OCLC.

The 2001 Legislature increased MINITEX appropriations by \$900,000 per year to improve document delivery and to purchase additional statewide licenses to both academic and general interest electronic resources. Simultaneously, the Department of Children, Families & Learning received a non-base appropriation of \$400,000 for each year of the 2002-2003 biennium to support access to general interest electronic resources through MINITEX. Online access to five national newspapers—the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Washington Post*—was part of ELM. These newspapers had hundreds of thousands of hits before the contract was discontinued due to budget cuts in 2002. Additional resources were being identified for licensing when the 2002 Legislature reduced funding by \$382,000 in Fiscal Year 2002 and \$737,000 in Fiscal Year 2003.

The \$737,000 reduction is reflected in the annual base appropriation for Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005. The Department of Children, Families & Learning has informed the Services Office that it will not request the \$400,000 annual appropriation for general interest resources for the 2004- 2005 biennium. Consequently, further reductions in electronic resources available to Minnesota residents could occur.

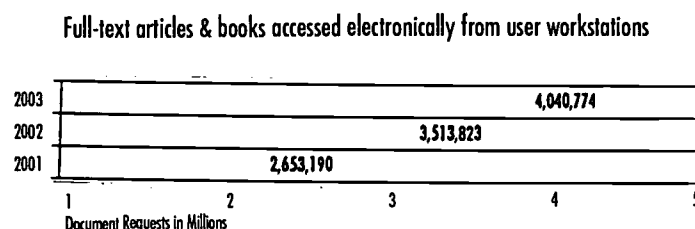
The loss of the Department of Children, Families & Learning funds may result in reduced access for higher education students. They made up 41 percent of the Electronic Library for Minnesota users during Fiscal Year 2002. Many local libraries cannot afford any electronic resources except those provided by MINITEX's Electronic Library for Minnesota. Greater efficiencies and enhancements to higher

Figure 11 MINITEX Document Delivery Statistics:
2001, 2002, and 2003 (Estimated)



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Figure 12 MINITEX Document Delivery Statistics:
2001, 2002, and 2003 (Estimated)



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

education curricula as well as ties to K-12 education can be achieved in the future by continuing statewide planning and licensing of electronic resources.

MINITEX licensed electronic resources provide some of the most important resources for the MnLINK Gateway, an online system which allows library users to access a single web site to search library catalogs and general online electronic resources from around the state. Loss of MINITEX licensed electronic resources would result in fewer resources being available on the MnLINK Gateway.

Further Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Other HESO Services."

Also see:

www.minitex.umn.edu

www.elm4you.org

www.mnlink.org

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MnLINK Library Information System

Overview and Background:

MnLINK is a statewide virtual library with a single point of access to most major Minnesota library catalogs and state-licensed electronic resources. It widens access to library resources for all Minnesota residents. By drawing upon the combined collections of Minnesota libraries, Minnesota residents can search the catalogs of academic, government, public and school libraries from a single web interface. MnLINK will increase the efficiency of library operations by using a common library automation system in all public academic libraries and by employing technology to streamline communications for resource sharing.

The MnLINK Library Information System is an automated library information system operating on common software. It will serve the students, faculty, and staff of the University of Minnesota and MnSCU technical colleges, state universities, and community colleges and users of state government libraries and participating private college, public and school libraries.

The MnLINK Gateway allows library users to access a single web site to search library catalogs and general online electronic resources from around the state. The Gateway provides a virtual catalog to the 33.7 million volumes owned by MnLINK participating libraries.

The Higher Education Services Office developed MnLINK in cooperation with the Library Planning Task Force, which was created by the 1994 Legislature to make recommendations about library and information services. MnLINK implementation is funded by a 1997 continuing state appropriation intended to cover the procurement and implementation costs of both the Integrated Library System and the MnLINK Gateway. The Gateway web site was launched in 1999; a biennial appropriation supports Gateway operations. The Services Office contracts with MnSCU for management of MnLINK and operation of the Gateway.

Highlights:

The Gateway web site, launched in 1999, links to state-licensed electronic resources and connects the online catalogs of 20 library systems so that they can be searched simultaneously. The Gateway is accessed at www.mnlink.org.

While anyone from around the world can find and search the library catalogs on the MnLINK Gateway, only those who are "authenticated" as a holder of a valid card from a participating Minnesota library can use the full set of features of the Gateway. In Fiscal Year 2002, 407,654 "authenticated" Minnesota library card holders searched the Gateway.

- Users conducted 731,490 searches on the Gateway in Fiscal Year 2002.
- Users viewed more than 1 million records and items through the Gateway in Fiscal Year 2002.

Theresa Granger

Goal: Start a mentoring program for African-American girls

Choice: University of Saint Thomas

Theresa always dreamed of being a lawyer and planned to be the first in her family to earn a college degree.

In high school, she took the classes she needed to get into college. When she didn't get accepted into the university she wanted, she was devastated and gave up on her dream. She watched her friends go to school and felt left out.

The following spring, she enrolled at the University of Saint Thomas where the financial aid office walked her through the aid application process.

With the help of grants, scholarships, loans, and various jobs, Theresa combined her interest in law and her desire to make a difference into a criminal justice major and has since enrolled in graduate school.

- Beginning in 2003, Minnesotans will be able to request interlibrary loan items using new Gateway software.
- Students, faculty, and staff at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities began using the MnLINK Integrated Library System during Summer 2002.
- Initial implementation of the first (beta-site) libraries to use the Integrated Library System software through a second server site at Minnesota State University, Mankato is scheduled to be completed before the end of Fiscal Year 2003.
- 3,690,000 catalog records were loaded into the MnLINK Integrated Library System in Fiscal Year 2002. More than 2,000,000 additional records are expected to be loaded before the end of Fiscal Year 2003.

A governance structure transition was completed. Originally rooted in the Library Planning Task Force, MnLINK now includes representative bodies from the Integrated Library System and Gateway Operations Committees and the MnLINK Policy Advisory Council.

Outlook:

The implementation of MnLINK is funded through a 1997 state appropriation of \$12 million, which was to be carried over until expended. The initial \$12 million appropriation is expected to cover MnLINK costs through the installation of the Gateway and the Integrated Library System. Training of staff in participating libraries will be covered in part by MnLINK funding and in part by local library resources. Once operational, the Integrated Library System will be funded by the participating libraries just as they have paid for their own automated library systems in the past. State funds are provided in an annual appropriation for the ongoing coordination and operations of the Gateway.

No budget changes for MnLINK were enacted in the 2001 Legislative session. In 2002, the Legislature removed \$822,000 from the continuing 1997 appropriation for MnLINK implementation which had been set aside for authority control on the MnLINK servers, licensing sup-



Minnesota *Electronic Access to Information* Library Information Network Project

port for report writer software, and the project's contingency fund. These reductions increase the financial risks associated with a large software installation, affect accuracy in searching by lowering record quality and standardization, and require participating libraries to bear some local implementation costs that would have been supported by the state appropriation.

The benefits of the Gateway include the ability to search a number of library catalogs and general electronic resources simultaneously. Statewide licenses for general online resources available through MnLINK have been funded through an appropriation to MINITEX and a non-base appropriation to the Department of Children, Families & Learning; both of these funding streams are in question due to state budget constraints. The reduction in MINITEX funding for Fiscal Year 2002-2003 has resulted in the discontinuation of a statewide license to the five national newspapers and in efforts to license more resources. The Department of Children, Families & Learning has informed the Services Office that it will not request the \$400,000 annual appropriation for general interest resources for the 2004-2005 biennium, so further reductions in electronic resources available to Minnesota residents could occur.

Further Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Other HESO Services."

www.mnlink.org

Learning Network of Minnesota

Overview :

The Learning Network of Minnesota links public campuses, schools and libraries, thereby increasing access to educational programs, library resources and academic support services through telecommunications technology. The Network is constantly evolving, using new technologies such as web-based learning, multimedia communication, desktop video and IP telephone (long distance calls via the Internet) that best meet the needs of Minnesota's students and educators.

Organizational Background:

The 1993 Minnesota Legislature funded the development of a statewide telecommunications network to connect public post-secondary education institutions around the state. The Legislature also established the Higher Education Telecommunications Council (HETC) to provide statewide leadership and vision for the new Learning Network.

In 1995, the HETC became the METC (Minnesota Education Telecommunications Council), and the Learning Network was expanded to include K-12 education and public libraries. The Legislature appropriated funds for telecommunications access grants to connect public school districts and public libraries to the Network.

Membership on the METC includes representatives from both houses of the Legislature, K-12 public schools, public libraries, state agencies (Departments of Administration, Children, Families & Learning, and the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office), and higher education (University of Minnesota, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and the Minnesota Private College Council).

The Learning Network is financed through state appropriations and local resources. The Higher Education Services Office serves as fiscal agent for the higher education portion of the Network and staffs the METC. A 10 percent match from member higher education institutions in each of the regions is required for ongoing operational costs and to support planning and coordination.

The Department of Children, Families & Learning is fiscal agent for the public school districts and library portion of the Network. Since Fiscal Year 2001, the K-12 funds have been allocated directly to school districts.

Highlights:

The higher education portion of the Learning Network is comprised of six telecommunications regions serving approximately 70 campuses throughout the state. Each region has a formal governance structure and is governed by a policy board with members representing local campuses.

The Learning Network enhances on-campus learning and provides distance education opportunities, thereby expanding access to higher education throughout the state. The Network's primary application is

Tashana Harris

Goal: To own her own business

Choice: College of Saint Catherine

Tashana loved math, but had no idea what she wanted to do with her life.

She dropped out of high school, got her GED, and then worked for two years with no skills. She knew she'd need more education for a career and a better paying job.

She enrolled in a two-year program at the College of Saint Catherine, but soon switched to the college's four-year accounting program instead.

As a single mother and a full-time student with no savings, she struggled to pay for college. Then she applied for and received a private scholarship that pays for all her expenses—tuition, books, living expenses—and the scholarship is renewed each year as long as she continues to maintain a good academic standing.

the offering of credit courses via web-based instruction and interactive television; over 1,000 college courses are offered over the Learning Network each year. Distance education gives college students the opportunity to take courses offered by other campuses and enables more high school students to take advantage of post-secondary enrollment options. In addition, colleges and universities rely on the Network to collaborate on degree programs in areas such as nursing, criminal justice, business, social work, education and agriculture.

Public higher education institutions rely on the Learning Network infrastructure for academic programs and administrative services, and both the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities include the Network as a key component in their strategic plans. The regional infrastructure provides campuses with high-speed video and data connections, and the regional organizations coordinate joint programs and applications.

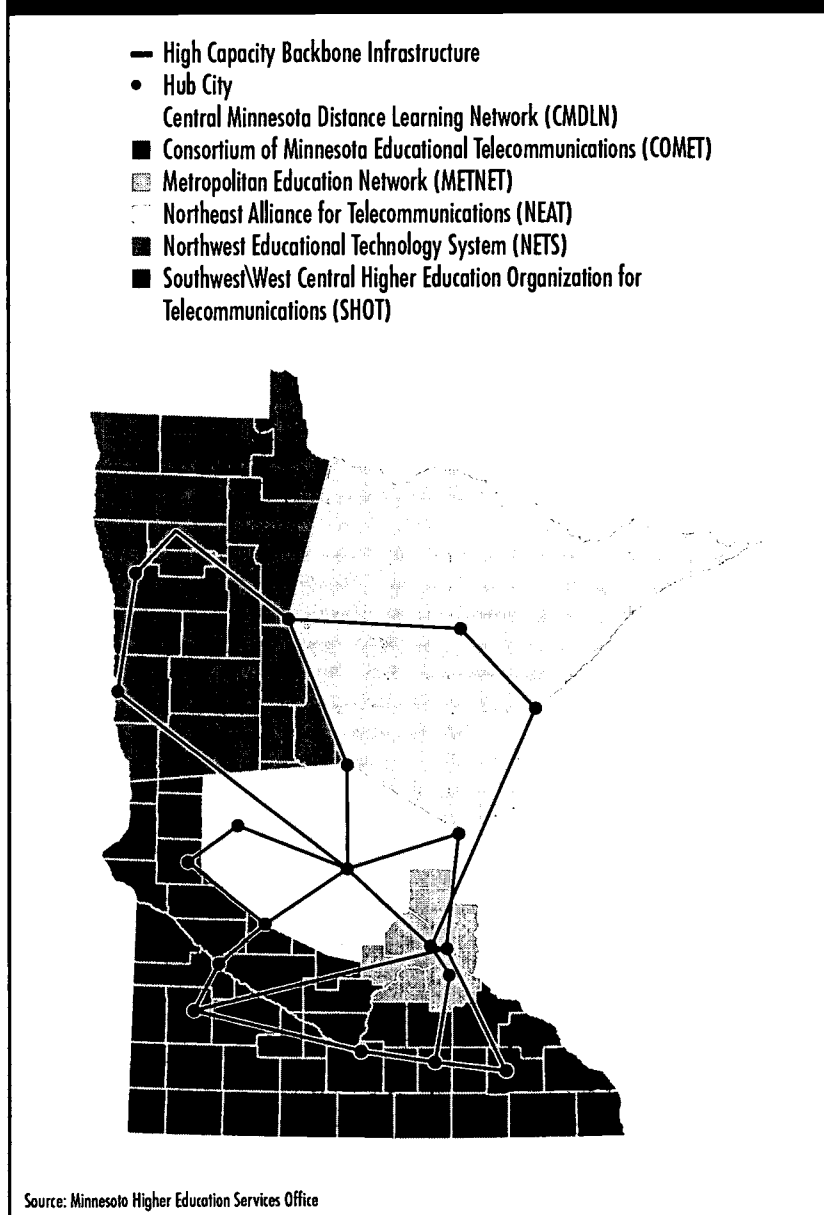
The Learning Network gives campuses access to a variety of services in addition to infrastructure, including Internet2, training for instructional and administrative applications, support for registration and fiscal services, and e-mail accounts that students may keep for life. IP telephone local and long distance telephone service via the Internet has resulted in significant cost savings for many campuses.

Outlook:

The 2001 Legislature provided an increase of \$900,000 each year of the biennium for the Learning Network to support modernization, maintenance, and upgrades. The 2002 Legislature reduced appropriations for the Learning Network by \$270,000 in Fiscal Year 2002 and \$900,000 in Fiscal Year 2003. This base cut of \$900,000 continues in Fiscal Year 2004 and 2005. The current funding base is \$5,179,000.

The higher education telecommunications regions will continue to diversify the Network in response to the changing academic and administrative needs of member institutions. The regions will be negotiating new long-term leases, which will allow them to move to a common platform.

Figure 13 Regional Higher Education Networks



This statewide standardization will further align Network services and infrastructure with the University and MnSCU, enabling the state to take full advantage of economies of scale.

Further Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Other HESO Services."

Consumer Protection

Overview and Background:

About 24 percent of Minnesota students choose private post-secondary institutions. These institutions provide important opportunities for Minnesota residents.

To provide consumer assistance and protection for students and prospective students of private post-secondary institutions, the Minnesota Higher Education Services Office is responsible for administering two regulatory laws. They are *Minnesota Statutes*, Chapter 136A.61-136A.71 (Private Institutions Registration) and *Minnesota Statutes*, Chapter 141 (Minnesota Private Career School Act).

These laws provide quality control and consumer protection by assuring that private post-secondary institutions meet state standards in order to operate legally in Minnesota. State oversight protects prospective students from schools that collect tuition money fraudulently, "diploma mills" that sell degrees without offering legitimate learning opportunities, and schools that lack sufficient expertise or financial resources to offer adequate educational programs. Both statutes require institutions to have a contingency plan to protect student records in case of closure. When the Services Office receives information that state standards are not being met, an investigation is initiated, and legal action can be taken to protect students if necessary.

The two laws have similar objectives, but specific requirements differ depending on the type of institution:

- **The Private Institutions Registration (PIR) statute** applies to private, non-profit institutions and other institutions which grant degrees or use the terms "academy," "college," "institute," or "university" in their names. The law also applies to out-of-state public institutions offering programs in Minnesota. Covered institutions must register with the Services Office by providing certain information and assurances. Each degree offered must receive approval from the Services Office. About 50 private, non-profit and out-of-state post-secondary institutions are approved to offer degree programs in Minnesota, and 26 other post-secondary providers are registered to offer non-degree programs.
- **The Private Career School Act** applies to for-profit schools and organizations that provide occupational training to individual students unless they qualify for an exemption under the law. About 70 private, for-profit career training providers are licensed to operate in Minnesota.

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Kao Xong Her

Goal: To work with and help people

Choice: Augsburg College

Early on, Kao knew she would go to college and that she would need to take the right classes to prepare academically.

She took International Baccalaureate pre-college classes and participated in a high school early awareness program. Both helped her learn more about college, campus life, and how to apply for financial aid.

Because her family wasn't able to save, she relies on grants, scholarships, loans, and work study to help pay for her education expenses at Augsburg College where she also helps prospective students explore their own college dreams.

Kao is now a sophomore and is considering a major in communications, social work, or education.

Highlights:

Because online education offered by providers in other states is difficult to regulate, students need to exercise particular caution when looking at Internet-based programs. Specific information on evaluating online education has been added to consumer information published by the Services Office and made available on the agency web site. (See Student and Parent Information, page 15.)

- Regulated institutions are required to keep student records for 50 years, but students can have trouble locating their records if the institution no longer exists or has changed its name. The Services Office keeps updated information on how records from these institutions can be obtained and now posts this information on the web.
- During the past two years, schools applying for licensure or seeking program approval have been encouraged to submit many materials electronically, cutting down on their work and storage needs at the Services Office.

Outlook:

Fees from licensed and registered institutions help support these regulatory programs. License fees are sufficient to cover administrative costs. Fees for Private Institutions Registration do not support the activity and may need to be raised for the first time since 1997, pending legislative approval.

Further ways to use technology are being explored. Legal and technical barriers will need to be resolved to permit some information to be submitted electronically.

Further information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Licensure and Registration of Schools."



The *Is This a Good School?* brochure describes strategies for students to evaluate the quality of educational programs and schools in Minnesota.

*Information
provided to
help evaluate
online
education.*

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Collection and Maintenance of Data

Overview and Background:

The Higher Education Services Office is responsible for collecting and maintaining enrollment and financial aid data on students attending Minnesota public and private institutions. These data help policy makers, post-secondary staff, and the public understand the current and future needs of Minnesotans who pursue higher education.

The following data sources enable the state to identify student movement from institution to institution, student characteristics, which institutions students are choosing, gaps in participation or access to higher education, and student borrowing and other assistance used by students and families to finance higher education:

- The **Student Enrollment Record Database** containing one record per student enrolled each fall. Used to produce basic reference information on student demographics and enrollment. The database started in 1983.
- The **reciprocity student data file** containing one record per student per enrollment on a reciprocity basis. Used to produce basic reference information on reciprocity enrollment trends and report geographic and institutional distribution of enrollments.
- **Data on student financial aid.** Program operating data are used to produce annual summaries of program activities, help manage flow of funds and awards associated with programs, and evaluate proposed program changes and project spending as part of the appropriations process. A survey of financial aid from all sources received by undergraduates at each post-secondary institution is conducted biennially.

Highlights:

Most products, such as publications, tables, and reports, are available on the agency web site. **Publication costs are reduced as the information is posted to the web site to read and download in portable formats.**

- Data and research information are continually added to the agency web site. More than 80 tables of enrollment and student financing data are posted. Over 30 quick "fast facts" answer frequently requested data and information questions.
- Updated estimates of higher education participation rates of new high school graduates use methods to estimate missing information.
- The Services Office collaborated with the Department of Children, Families & Learning to link its Minnesota High School Follow-up Survey with the Office's Student Enrollment Record Database. With the combined information, the Services Office produced an analysis of participation in Minnesota and reciprocity institutions by family income and other student and family characteristics.

Ted Kiefat

Goal: Elementary Math Teacher and Coach

Choice: University of Minnesota, Duluth, Lake Superior College, and the University of Wisconsin, Superior

For Ted, moving as a child from rural northern Minnesota to the urban diversity of Minneapolis was difficult, and his grades suffered.

The only thing that kept him in school was sports, but he also knew he wanted a college education.

He went to the University of Minnesota, Duluth, but dropped out after two years to join the work force. Ten years later, he enrolled at Lake Superior College.

His efforts as a middle school hockey coach earned him a grant from the local hockey association. Grants, loans, and scholarships helped him complete his associate degree. Ted is now studying elementary education at the University of Wisconsin, Superior.

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- A close, formal relationship with the National Center for Education Statistics is maintained by the Services Office, serving as Minnesota's Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) coordinator.

Outlook:

Minnesota has been selected as one of 12 states that will have a larger student sample in the 2003-2004 cycle of the National Post-Secondary Student Aid Study. The Services Office is facilitating this important effort to obtain a rich data set on the demographics of Minnesota students and how they pay for college. Students at most public and not-for-profit post-secondary institutions will be surveyed during the 2003-2004 academic year. The information collected will include the characteristics of students enrolled in post-secondary education, such as race, ethnicity, age, family status, parental background, high school course taking, and grades. In addition, comprehensive information about the "net price" of education to the student and family, how student "need" for financial aid is being met, how much students borrow, and how borrowing varies with tuition prices and income will be available on Minnesota students for the first time.

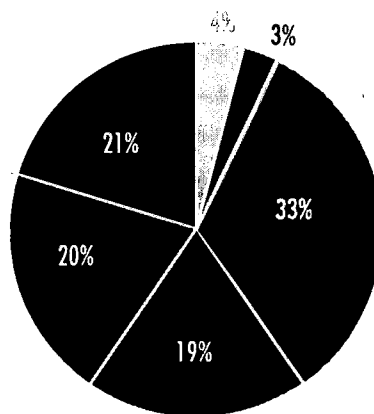
Further Information:

www.mheso.state.mn.us

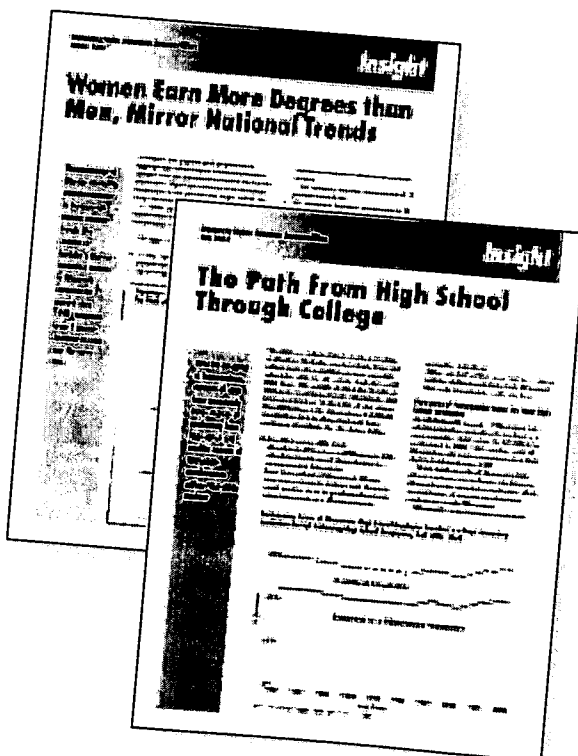
Click on "Data on Enrollments & Financing."

Figure 14 Fall 2002 Headcount Enrollment

■ Community and Technical Colleges	104,280
■ State Universities	61,635
■ University of Minnesota	62,789
■ Private Four-Year Colleges	65,047
■ Private Two-Year Colleges	14,297
■ Private Professional Colleges	10,603
Total	318,651



Source: Minnesota Higher Education Services Office



Insight is a four-page newsletter that highlights student enrollment trends and issues.

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Federal and State Grant Programs

The Services Office administers higher education programs of statewide scope. This section summarizes the Federal Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program and the Minnesota Post-Secondary Service Learning Program.

Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program

Overview and Background:

The Services Office administered the **Federal Eisenhower Professional Development Program** which awarded competitive grants to higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations for staff development of K-12 educators in core academic areas. During 2002, \$1,017,516 in Eisenhower funds supported 25 Minnesota projects designed to strengthen content knowledge and instructional skills in mathematics, science and social studies for 800 K-12 teachers and 100 K-7 classroom paraprofessionals.

The program was reauthorized in December 2001 by the passage of the **No Child Left Behind Act**. It is now known as the **Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program**, Title II, Part A of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The reauthorizing legislation focuses on stronger accountability for results. Effective teaching methods from proven, scientifically based, professional development strategies that have been shown to increase student achievement are emphasized. The grant program supports state and local activities that aim to improve teacher quality and increase the number of highly qualified teachers in classrooms of each state. **With the goal of increasing student academic achievement, \$998,533 is available in Minnesota for Fiscal Year 2003 to support projects for professional development of K-12 teachers and paraprofessionals in mathematics, science, and social studies.**

Highlights:

Under the Improving Teacher Quality legislation, states are required to ensure that funded activities are grounded in scientifically based research so that students benefit from teaching practices and methods that are based on what is known to work. In addition, the legislation places a priority on assuring that teachers are identified as highly qualified through demonstrated subject area competence in the subjects they teach.

- For Fiscal Year 2003, the Improving Teacher Quality Grant Program requires that funds target schools with the greatest need for assistance. In addition to requiring support for projects in high-need school districts, highly ranked proposals providing services to Title I schools identified for school improvement will be given preference in funding.
- The No Child Left Behind Act establishes a training standard for newly hired Title I instructional paraprofessionals and for paraprofessionals currently on staff. The third year of Minnesota's ini-

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Isaac Carranza

Goal: Electronics Technician

Choice: Ridgewater College, Willmar

For Isaac, the move from San Antonio, Texas to Willmar meant opportunity.

A high school academic mentor motivated him to excel, and Isaac graduated with a \$1,000 Most Improved Student Award, an amount matched dollar-for-dollar by Ridgewater College when he attended the school in the fall.

He also received additional financial assistance from the Motivation Education Training program, which helps minorities and migrant farm workers transitioning to college.

Through his own motivation as well as academic and financial support, Isaac graduated from Ridgewater's electronics technician program with an associate of arts degree in science.

tiative targeting elementary school paraprofessionals in mathematics classrooms has modeled a format for rigorous paraprofessional training. Projects at Bemidji State University, Ridgewater College, and Augsburg College provide a framework for training of elementary/middle school paraprofessionals.

- In the 18 year history of the program, 1985 through 2002, \$10 million has been awarded in grants to higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations. **Approximately 12,000 teachers and 300 classroom paraprofessionals have participated in projects to improve teaching and learning of students in mathematics, science, social studies, reading, and foreign languages.**

Outlook:

Under program reauthorization through Fiscal Year 2007, the accountability and assessment provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act require states and districts to improve student achievement and close achievement gaps among students of different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. Higher education projects must work in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families & Learning and school districts to ensure adequate yearly progress is made toward increases in student proficiency as dictated by the No Child Left Behind legislation.

Further Information:

The text of the entire No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is available online at:
www.ed.gov/legislation

An overview of program activity under the Improving Teacher Quality State Grant program is available online at:
www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/progsum/title2a.html#quality

Minnesota Post-Secondary Service Learning Program

Overview and Background:

The State Post-Secondary Service Learning Program supports the development of campus/community collaborations that address significant long-term community needs and enhance the academic and civic development of post-secondary students.

Highlights:

The 2001 Minnesota Omnibus Higher Education Act provided \$386,000 for the biennium to support the development of campus/community collaboration programs that address significant long-term community needs and enhance the academic and civic development of post-secondary students. Competitive grants were awarded to 13 post-secondary institutions and nonprofits in four grant categories for this biennium.

- **Model Engaged Campus Grants** designed to move civic engagement into the core of the institution's values and operations were awarded to Metropolitan State University and Augsburg College.
- **Start-up Program Grants** designed to begin service-learning or campus-community initiatives were awarded to Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Northwestern Health Sciences University, the Payne Phalen Block Nurse Program, and the Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation.
- **Integrating Service with Academic Study Grants** designed to increase the quality, impact, and/or sustainability of service-learning initiatives that integrate community service with academic study were awarded to St. Cloud State University, the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Second Harvest Heartland, and the University of St. Thomas.
- **Quality Improvement Grants** to improve the quality, impact, and sustainability of existing service-learning or campus-community collaboration initiatives were awarded to

*13 grants
awarded
to post-
secondary
institutions
and
nonprofits
in four
categories.*

Section 9

*Assessment
examines
outcomes
of service
learning
grants.*

The College of St. Catherine, Hamline University, and the University of Minnesota, Crookston.

- An initiative of this biennium is an **assessment of the 1989-2000 state financial support for campus-community collaboration/service-learning grants**. In addition to determining the outcomes of prior grant supported projects, the current status of civic engagement and service-learning at campuses in Minnesota is being documented, and a set of indicators to assist campuses in defining future campus civic engagement is being developed. Data from this study will be summarized in a final report in January, 2003.
- With support from the state program, the **Minnesota Campus Compact** continues in the role of primary provider of training, technical assistance, and program evaluation for Minnesota's campuses with an interest in post-secondary service learning. Campus Compact works to facilitate development of strategic, sustainable partnerships between Minnesota higher education institutions and communities and for maintaining support of meaningful service-learning experiences that increase college student participants' academic performance, job readiness, and citizenship skills.

Outlook:

The 2001 Legislature increased funding for this activity, but future funding levels are uncertain due to the projected state budget shortfall. Although at a reduced level, continuation of base funding would allow the agency to support its mission of facilitating interaction among and collaboration with organizations that share responsibility for education in Minnesota.

Further Information:

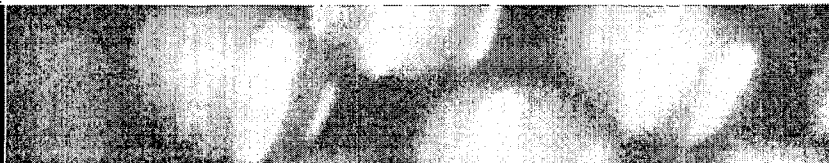
www.mheso.state.mn.us

Click on "Other HESO Services."

Information on the federal government's support of opportunities for citizens to give back to their communities and their nation through voluntary service coordinated by The Corporation for National and Community Service can be found at: www.cns.gov.

An overview of Minnesota Campus Compact's effort to engage Minnesota post-secondary students and institutions in strategic partnerships that strengthen communities and education for informed and active citizenship can be found at: www.mncampuscompact.org.

An overview of the national post-secondary effort to promote civic purposes of higher education can be found at: www.compact.org.



**Minnesota Higher Education Services
Council Members**

Ralph Brown, St. Paul

Fue Heu, Burnsville

Mary Thun, Excelsior

Ronald McKinley, Marine on the St. Croix

Arthur Seaberg, Eagan

Sara Standke, St. Paul

Donald Sudor, Rochester

John Testa, Maple Grove

Kathleen Vellenga, St. Paul

Minnesota Higher Education Services Office

Robert K. Poch, Director

Joint Vision Statement

Minnesota Higher Education Services Office and Services Council

Our services enable Minnesota to provide access for people who seek post-secondary education to achieve personal goals and contribute to the educational, cultural, civic, and economic advancement of the state and nation.

**Mission Statement
Minnesota Higher Education
Services Council**

The Minnesota Higher Education Services Council promotes better futures through giving recommendations and advice to develop an educated community. We advance the public interest by providing access to post-secondary education for the people of Minnesota.

**Mission Statement
Minnesota Higher Education
Services Office**

Through our advocacy and actions, we work to:

- achieve student financial access to post-secondary education;
- enable students to choose among post-secondary educational options;
- protect and inform educational consumers;
- produce independent, statewide information on post-secondary education; and
- facilitate interaction among and collaborate with organizations that share responsibility for education in Minnesota.



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